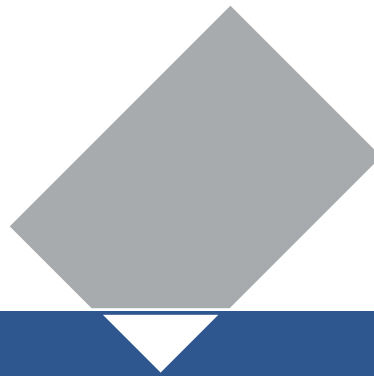# CODD

**CENTRO DE ESTUDOS E PROMOÇÃO
DE CIDADANIA, DIREITOS HUMANOS E MEIO AMBIENTE**

CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND PROMOTION
OF CITIZENSHIP, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

HOW WERE INHAMBANE VOTERS INFORMED ABOUT THE

ELECTIONS?

OBSERVATION/RESEARCH REPORT
ON THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND CITIZENSHIP
IN THE 18 APRIL, 2012 INHAMBANE BY-ELECTIONS

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Maputo, May 2012

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Technical Information

Acknowledgements

Executive Summary

How was the Inhambane Electorate informed about the elections? This is the main issue that the Center for Research and Promotion of Citizenship, Human Rights and the Environment (CODD) research/ observer team seeks to answer vis-à-vis the 18 April Inhambane municipal by-elections.

Starting from the assumption that access to information is the basic ingridient for citizen participation in political life, especially during election periods when citizens choose their rulers; CODD seeks to measure how the various actors in the electoral process (the electoral management and administration bodies, citizens and political parties) communicated in Inhambane.

At a time when the country records high rates of abstention resulting in the poor exercise of citizenship, this report shows that the electoral bodies have a pivotal role in promoting communication that would guarantee not only information about the electoral process, but also education about the importance of voting. On the other hand, political parties and the competing candidates would have the responsibility to communicate not only to influence the electorate, but also to inform them about their governance plans.

The analysis of these elements found a weakness of the electoral bodies to create communication programmes directed to citizen's voter education, particularly in a context where voters have expressed lack of interest in relation to politics. From the political parties side, two major trends were eminent: the Frelimo candidature valued an emotional appeal to voters through the campaign sensationalism and materialisation (offering material goods such as slippers) and the MDM candidate maintained its tendency to thematise and individualise the campaign, through the valorisation of direct communication.

The analysis of the various means and communication spaces gives interesting elements that help to explain the question "how voters were informed about the elections?", especially by illustrating that there were several mechanisms that were adopted and ignored by the electoral bodies and the candidates in the Inhambane by-elections in the provision of information.

Generally, the level of reception by the voters was incipient to ensure full participation of citizens in the electoral process.

And to João Luis Vaz Nobre, our first Executive Director, recently deceased (06-03-2012), victim of a gun shot wound; he continues inspiring us in our work.

Abreviations

CEC - Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies in Communication

CODD – Centre for Research and Promotion of Citizenship, Human Rights and the Environment

CNE – National Election Commission

CPE – Provincial Election Commission

CRM – Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique

FRELIMO – The Liberation Front of Mozambique

MDM – Mozambican Democratic Movement

TVM – Television of Mozambique

RM – Radio Mozambique

STAE – Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat

STV – Soico Television

TIM - Mozambican Independent Television

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Introduction ◂◂◂ ◂◂ ◂◂ ◂◂ ◂◂ ◂◂

Access to information can be regarded as the "cornerstone" of democracy, especially because it represents one of the most important ingredients in ensuring citizens' political participation. The ability of citizens to participate through the free exercise of opinion or to choose their leaders directly depends on the level of information they have about the options, resources and available alternatives.

During election periods, access to information plays a crucial role since the more information the citizens have the more conscious decisions they make. That is why it is necessary to use several institutional mechanisms to enable voters to participate and make their decisions in a well-informed manner (Canela & Nascimento, 2009).

Therefore, it is understood that all the actors in the electoral process have to mobilise all efforts and means of communication, not simply communicate to influence but also to offer a wider range of information to voters.

Casting a glance at the history of elections in Mozambique since 1994, it is clear there has been a noticeable increasing decline of voter´s numbers(1). On the one hand, this tendency could mean that voters are not interested in the electoral processes and on the other, that they have a low level of knowledge about the importance of elections as well as in the candidates' proposals themselves.

If the second argument is taken as valid (the low level of knowledge), one could problematise the way the electoral process was reported to various stakeholders. Especially the the electoral bodies, including the National Elections Commission (CNE) and the Technical Secretariat of Electoral Administration (STAE), responsible for managing the voting process and voter education; and by the political parties with a huge responsibility to establish communication mechanisms that foster a participation based on adequate knowledge about their electoral platforms.

It was from this starting point that the Center for Studies and Citizenship Promotion, Human Rights and Environment (CODD) proposed to conduct a study on the quality and impact of communication in the participation and the formation of conscious vote. Intending on establishing a long-term research project in partnership with the Center for Inter-disciplinary Studies of Communication (CEC), CODD undertook an observation/ pilot study in the Inhambane municipal by-election held on 18

April 2012, which produced the results presented by this report.

This research/observation was held with the aim of gauging how the electoral process actors reported in two main levels. The first is related to the electoral bodies (not excluding political parties) and attempts to understand how the information about the electoral process, as well as the appeal to the importance of voting, has contributed to the level of voter participation, and the second is linked to the political parties and seeks to analyse the strategies used by the political parties in communicating with their voters.

The document presents four main parts: i) a brief theoretical background on the role and communication mechanisms in the electoral process, ii) the methodologies used for the observation/research process; iii) the analysis and discussion of results, iv) and lessons learned. The voters that wish to quickly get information on the major findings of the report can go to the last chapter on lessons learned.

▲
CATPION: A young voter after exercising her right to vote in Inhambane.

Photo: Egidio Vaz

(1) *For example, in the last four general elections turnouts kept falling: 1994 – 88%; 1999 – 68 %; 2004 – 36 % e 2009 – 45%.*

From a Legal Perspective

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Foto: Egídio Vaz

Access to information is recognized in almost all democratic constitutions as a fundamental right, indispensable to citizen participation in political life, because only those who are sufficiently informed can participate.

The Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique (CRM) recognizes this right in Article 48: "All citizens have the right to freedom of expression, press freedom and as well as the right to information."

Although literally number 2 of the same article addresses the exercise freedom of expression , on the other hand, it includes, in a practical manner, the freedom that citizens have to participate in the public life through the expression of their ideas and wishes.

In the scope of electoral communication, in Article 49 the CRM recognizes the need to create spaces in which political parties can participate and provide information directly to the public without the mediation of journalists through the free air-time platform.

This free air time, as stated by number 4 of Article 49 of the CRM all the competitors in the electoral process have the rights to use the free air-time equally in all radio stations and public television, at the national and local levels.

Although free air-time is relevant as a method to inform voters about the candidates, it is important to highlight the growing need electoral campaigns have to use journalists' mediation because voters do not trust the information conveyed by these methods. The next chapter seeks to raise some theoretical questions about electoral communication and the centrality of the activities of journalist.

Electoral communication, journalism centrality and the personification of candidates in the messages ◂◂◂ ◂◂ ◂◂ ◂◂

Political communication, especially in electoral periods, may result in the use of diverse mass media in order to ensure that the multiple messages reach the citizens in accordance with the actors interests. Although many communication strategies are used, it can be said that currently the activities, the political parties' communication strategies are focused on the media.

As McNair (1999 in Cunha, 2011) points out, in political communications politicians preferably prepare their messages for the media. Even when they use places of contact with citizens, rallies, visits to public places, communication strategies are first aimed at capturing the interest and media coverage (radio, television, newspapers and magazines).

Although parties use direct communication tools to voters through the form of propaganda, interpersonal contacts, posters, rallies, outdoors, and other free air-time, and others, the communication through news continues to be one of the most privileged by the politicians thanks to the credibility that is attributed to the work of journalists, in a context where the information produced by political parties are viewed with suspicion (Cunha, 2011).

That is why it is said that news plays an important role in informing the public on the proposals of the candidates. The political campaigns organizations pay a lot of attention and make significant investments to attract the favorable attention to their candidates in media coverage. It is through the media that campaign events gain visibility (Graber, 1990: 145).

Several surveys conducted in the United States and Western Europe have shown that election coverage has been changing in the logic of programming of political parties themselves, political parties are shaping their agenda according to the media's program, trying to fit events in the newspapers' schedule.

By antecipating the reaction of journalists, campaign strategists plan their daily activities, taking into account the way the press will carry out its coverage (Arterton, 1990:161).

To understand the role of news in the dynamics of the modern political process, one must must take into account the changes that occurred in the political system and the media in the West, marked by a strong professionalisation of electoral campaigns, including the management of news by spin-doctors – these are specialists who advise candidates and parties on how to get a positive coverage in the press.

The practice has in recenet years been extended to several democratic countries, a process understood by many authors as the Americanisation of campaigns (Swanson&

Mancini, 1996, Bennett & Manheim, 2001; Blumler and Gurevitch, 2001).

The professionalisation of political communication, characterised by the implementation of marketing and public relations models, has been done mainly to improve the influence of political parties in the coverage done by journalists with the aim to mobilize the largest number of individuals (Blumler &Kavanaugh, 1999 in Bennett and Entman, 2001: 16, Esser et al, 2000).

The implementation of new strategies in political communication has brought about deep implications in the way the candidates prioritise their attention as regard their relationship with the electorate. Thus, the valuing of emotional appeal as opposed to the rational, topic simplification, the emphasis on graphic images, the frequent use of negative information towards the opposition are some of its main characteristics. (Bennett and Manheim, 2001). As the media achieve a more autonomous role, the relations between politicians and journalists tend to become more antagonists (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1995).

With the growing trend of campaign theme simplification and their association to media coverage, several studies presented by Cunha (2011) and Edelman (1988) on the construction and evolution of the image of political leaders, show that the evaluation of a political leader does not depend on demonstrable performance, but on public opinion volatility dependent on organised interest and the show of the media, especially on television, where candidates appear surrounded increasingly by strong theatrics and simultaneously more banal in their pattern of execution. These theatrics "tend to focus on the description of the character, personality, temperament, personality traits, demanding a persuasive and flexible leadership with which the citizen sometimes identifies with or is repelled by."

The theoretical lines presented here show how the parties organise themselves to communicate, taking advantage of the various spaces and media, and mobilizing them to receive greater attention from journalists as intermediaries of a credible communication, particularly in a context in which the politicians themselves (2) are viewed with suspicion.

(2) *Bumler and Gurevitch (in Serrano, 2006:96) say that one of the results of incidence of electoral campaigns on the media and journalism has been the weakening of political parties as mobilizing forces of citizens in defense of their interests. This departure causes a growing dependence of politicians and voters in relation to the media. To factor for this phenomenon, various researchers use expressions such as "The Age of the Political Press (Kalb, 1992); "Media Politics" (Arteton, 1985); "Polits played out in the Media" (Benson at al, 1994); "Society dominated by the Media Politics Complex" (Swanson, 1990).*

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Foto: Egídio Vaz

I n Mozambique, there are still very few studies on electoral or political communication. One can consider Pereira (2007)'s research which offers strong indication of the sources from which citizens get political information. In the study, Pereira shows that radio occupies a paramount venue in informing the public, especially Radio Mozambique. But he warns that "listening to the radio, watching television or reading newspapers does not automatically mean that they follow-up current politics or political debate." Thus the author concludes that in Mozambique the media are not the main source of information from which citizens follow political processes, in part due to aspects of accessing them.

Based on this point of view, although the theoretical debate on the focusing of communication strategies on the media is relevant, it is important, in the Mozambican context, to consider the importance of other integrated media forms as important for the information and the formation of a conscious vote.

If one takes Pereira (2007)'s findings to be true, one of the practical implications for the managers and administrators of the Mozambican electoral process would be to widen the spectrum of their collaboration with various societal actors in order to, in a more collaborative manner, work to ensure access to information for everyone and the formation and consolidation of a strong social consciousness about the vote and the whole electoral process.

Moreover, because Mozambican citizens obtain information through various sources such as social networks, community leaders, election campaigns, political parties, party identification, among others, it would be of paramount importance to gague to what extent the information provided by the various medium is qualitatively relevant to (a) raise awareness among voters in the electoral process itself and its nuances, (b) voters mobilisation to vote and (c) civic engagement (interest) of the citizens in the elections.

Foto: Egídio Vaz

This electoral survey/observation not only had as its primary goal to observe the electoral process (especially in the last campaign days, the voting day and the day of announcement of partial results) in light of the legal framework that regulates electoral processes, but also to assess the quality and impact of communication outputs delivered to citizens, means used and the agents involved in the electoral process, and thereafter assess the extent to which the information, access to information, and respective quality impacted on the electoral process as such, in its various dimensions, namely:

questions were drawn up:

1. How do political parties structure themselves to communicate with potential voters during the elections?
2. What kinds of media were used by the parties to communicate with the electorate?
3. What was the level of participation of the media in civic education and coverage of the candidates?
4. What was the level of communication STAE voter education for the vote?
5. What was the impact of communication and political information on citizens in matters of the

a. Level of access to information by the citizens
b. Quality of information and its impact on the civic engagement vis-à-vis the elections
c. The impact of political information on the vote
d. Needs of information generated and not satisfied by a voter and its impact in the formation of a vote.

Arising from the objectives set, the team used qualitative methodologies by applying open-ended interviews with the actors at the different levels of the electoral process (STAE, CNE, political parties, media and citizens) and participatory observation of the candidates' environmental campaigns and polling stations.
The survey sought to capture four stages of the electoral process, including civic education, campaigning, voting and announcement of results, taking into account the different actors of the process.

For this purpose, the following five key research

electoral process and candidates?

Research Targets	Research Questions and Data Collection Techniques
STAE	To understand through open-ended questions the communication strategies used for electoral communication, voter education and promotion of citizens' engagement in elections. Ascertain the level of content adjustment (in terms of media and language used) throughout the voter education process.
Candidates/Parties	To exploit through observation and interviews the strategies used by the candidates for electoral communication, looking at the campaign themes, direct means of communication, usage of free air-time, access to and relationship with journalists.

Polling Stations	To observe the correct indication of means of access to voting sites; ease of access to polling stations; suitable communication systems for recognition of polling stations, the interpersonal communication skills of polling agents.
Voters	To exploit through interviews the sources of information on elections; the level of knowledge of the electoral process; the level of knowledge of the candidates and their electoral manifestos; the accessibility of voting information as well as its importance placed upon elections.

The study was carried out between 12 and 21 April 2012. On 12, 13, 14 and 15 April, there were monitoring and candidates' campaigns observation activities through direct participation at rallies and other visual communication means used by political parties. On 16 and 17 April, interviews were conducted with STAE, the campaign managers of the two candidates (Benedito Guimino for Frelimo and Fernando Nhaca for MDM) and with some citizens. The team set aside 18 April to participate and analyse the level of access to information in polling stations, as well as electoral observation in general.

Foto: Egídio Vaz

The Inhambane municipality is located in the centre of the Inhambane province and is the capital of the province bearing the same name, specifically at latitude 23º 50' South and longitude 35º 30' East. To its north lies the bay bearing the same name, down south by the Jangamo district through Guiúa River which supplies the city with drinking water, to the east by the Indian Ocean and west by the Bay of Inhambane.

The Inhambane municipality is located about 480 kilometres north of Maputo and some 30 kilometres north-east of the main North-South highway.

It has a total area of 192 square kilometers including the sea, with a population of 63,867 inhabitants, an illiteracy rate fixed at 41.3 percent, according to the last census.

This population is distributed in 22 bairros (neighbourhoods) and one locality (Inhambane Island). Its population mainly practises agriculture and animal husbandry, fisheries and trade. It is mainly a tourism municipality, with beautiful beaches which attract many domestic and foreign tourists, especially the beaches of Barra, Tofo, Tofinho and Rochas.

With urban characteristics, the city of Inhambane has a rich pattern and fabric covering urban, semi-urban, and rural areas, divided into 22 neighbourhoods and a locality designated as: Balane I, Balane II, III Balane, Liberdade I, Liberdade II, Liberdade III, Chalambe I, Chalambe II, Muelé I Muelé II, Muelé III, Marrambone, Mucucune, Chemane, Conguiana, Malembuane, Guitambaturo, Nhamua, Josina Machel, Machavenga, Salele, Siquiriva and Inhambane Island.

From an ethnic viewpoint, the majority of the population is Bitonga, although there are also elements pure Chope.

Media

Inhambane city has three open signal television stations, namely Televisão of Mozambique, Soico Television (STV) and TV Miramar. However, the media with a greater reach is Radio Mozambique, which also broadcasts using a local signal. With regards to print media, Inhambane receives, with the exception of Diário da Zambezia, all the papers printed in the country. However, the number of copies does not reach 1.000 copies per week. Moreover, although the number of newspapers available is very limited for a population of 63,000 inhabitants, they rarely sell out. Altogether, the weeklies O Público, Escorpião and Canal de Moçambique send 45 copies per week.

The weekly Savana sends 100 copies. O País, a daily newspaper, sends 50. Diário de Moçambique also distributes 50. @Verdade, a free newspaper started sending 5.000 copies during the electoral process, in the eight weeks preceding the vote.

STAE and Voter Education

Voter education plays a key role in electoral participation, particularly in a context in which the country has experienced high rates of abstention.

Overall, the concerns raised in the survey intended to see whether the level of adjustment of the media, messages and language answered two major challenges: i) inform voters about the electoral process (which includes information about the electoral calendar and voting procedures) and ii) raise the level of interest on the importance and significance of voting.

With regards to the media used, there was a notable strong focus on interpersonal communication and promotion of entertainment events, such as shows, for the transmission of messages on the electoral calendar and voting procedures.

20 voter education agents were deployed to cover the 43,206 registered voters for the by-election of Inhambane, through door-to-door campaigns and in farming plots. The reason STAE conducted a voter education in farming plots(3) was due to the fact that voter education took place between 8 am to 12 pm when many potential voters, especially in suburban neighbourhoods, were in their farming plots, as explained by the STAE Inhambane City Director, Julio Rafael. "This was defined together with community and religious leaders to hold voter education campaigns in these areas."
However, Inhambane's 22 neighbourhoods plus

a locality, with 43,206 people registered to vote, saw many of its voters not covered by the work of STAE's voter education agents. Indeed, in the final day of voter registration the agents only visited Marrambone, Siquiriva and Inhambane Island.

To ensure the identification of polling stations and reinforce messages about the process, STAE says that it held shows in every neighbourhood, with the participation of local musicians and voter education agents. However, residents of most of the outlying neighbourhoods claim otherwise. Furthermore, according to our electoral observation team sent to Inhambane during the process of voters roll update, no voter education shows were held in Conguiana, Malembuane, Guitambaturo, Nhamua, Josina Machel, Machavenga, Salele, Siquiriva and Inhambane Island(4). Only at 14:00 in the final day of voters roll update did STAE carry out its voter education walk in two places only, namely Siquiriva and Inhambane Island. The three STAE voter education agents were armed with a single megaphone which was used in the two neighbourhoods mentioned above.

On the other hand, the mission found that during the voters roll update and voter registration, which coincided with the voter education campaign, there seemed to have been "a very great job" from STAE to prevent youths who apparently were not natives of Inhambane from registering, thus contradicting the electoral law which affords the right to every citizen of voting

(3) *Interview with Inhambane STAE Director Júlio Rafael*

(4) *Participatory observation of our electoral observer team during the whole voter registration process.*

age to register, as long as they have at least been living at the place in the past six months(5).

Despite this reality, voter education carried out by the Radio and other mass media seems to have helped greatly in mitigating the lack of information and voter education, which the local STAE says it was carried out with success. This fact was confirmed in part in the interviews with voters.

STAE assumed that simply by supplying information to the Radio and other mass media on the date, time and polling station the responsible citizen would be able to go and vote on the scheduled date, time and places indicated.

However, the reality that faces the electoral bodies since 1999 is still the same: How to explain the level of abstentions – which for this case was 61.2 percent?

A comprehensive analysis of the data collected through interviews and participatory observation, it was noted that STAE was more oriented towards producing communication based on information (via Radio Mozambique and other mass media) about the electoral process and very little - or nothing – information aimed at raising the awareness of citizens and explanation on the exercise of their duties and civil rights, including the freedom to choose their government (voter education).

Although the information provided gave a special emphasis on information about the extraordinary nature of 18 April elections, in addition to information on the electoral calendar, it cannot be said that there was mobilization of voters to exercise their rights, but the aggregation of data and an explanation on the urgency of new elections.

It was also noticeable that in an attempt to change strategy and contain costs, STAE used less the mass media to reinforce the messages about the role of participation in elections. For example, the local station of Televisão de Moçambique did not broadcast a single voter education spot, the exception being the two commercials produced and broadcast only in Portuguese on Radio Mozambique.

On the other hand, journalists and opinion leaders had a role of little impact in educating about the importance of voting. Much of the information collected on the activities of journalists, particularly in the local channels of Radio Mozambique and Televisão de Moçambique, show that the work done was very much grounded in the information about the process and its timetable (6).

In addition to the analysis carried out by the team, several elements, some of which are not explored in this research that explain the abstentions, can be found in the chapters on the communication of political parties and lack of trust between citizens and politicians.

In short, it can be said that the voter education campaign in Inhambane was weak and unable to mobilise the population to vote. Notwithstanding, the method used was for some reason not new, as it is the same one used in previous campaigns.

One aspect that the CODD research team found was that, in general, the objectives of voter education campaigns carried out by STAE are more political than technical. In a situation where there are high levels of abstention and given the need to give more efficacy to public funds, it is unclear how STAE limits itself to drawing broad political objectives centred on the simple need to spread information rather than in the adoption of intelligent, tangible and measurable measures to mobilise and raise the level of civic consciousness for elections. Such tangible goals would include the determination of a specific turnout rate of reference, against which the performance component of STAE's voter education STAE could be evaluated.

As a state entity interested in electoral processes and broad popular participation, STAE should abandon the generalist methods of communication for popular mobilization and adopt modern methods and customized for different segments of audience, which are able to raise not only awareness but also the interest, will and commitment of citizens to the elections. These methods already tested and proven could be eclectic, integrated and cross-disciplinary communication, objectified to change citizens' behaviour towards the elections. Promote shows or traveling by car with megaphones in hand through the neighborhoods can help of very little towards changing the current voting behaviour; on the contrary, it only helps in confusing the people used to seeing the same activists doing various civic education campaigns, including on flooding and cyclones, malaria, fumigation, HIV and AIDS, campaigns and agricultural fairs, auctioning of clothing or livestock, among others, that use the same type of strategy, methods and instruments of popular mobilisation.

(5) *The majority of these students were from the Eduardo Mondlane University Higher School of Hotel Management and Tourism. The chairperson of the Students Representative Association at the school who happens to be Youth Parliament representative at provincial level was one of the victims. He said that most of his colleagues faced the same problem, since STAE demanded that they produce a student's and identity card in order to allow them to register to vote. Only those with great courage and truly interested in the process, managed to register. And these were discouraged from informing others they could register.*

(6)*When we mention "other mass media" we place an emphasis on Jornal @Verdade that during the process sent 50.000 copies of its weekly edition, which were distributed free of charge throughout the city. Although they get to Inhambane in small numbers and clearly not enough, the other newspapers were less ready maybe due to their price, and as such inaccessible to the majority of the poor.*

Political parties and communicating
with the electorate ◂◂◂ ◂◂

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Foto: Egídio Vaz

The analysis of communication between the candidates of both parties (Benedito Guimino of Frelimo and Fernando Nhaca's MDM) was done in order to measure three key components: i) the type of media used, ie, how the parties communicated with voters, ii) the contents (what the candidates said to voters) and iii) level of adjustment of contents to the needs of voters, that is, to what extent what was said and the means used were successful in informing the receptor.

To explore these elements, observations of the candidates' campaign material, participation in rallies, interviews with the two candidates' campaign managers and the leaders/journalists from the main mass media bodies that participated in the campaign coverage were carried out.

Integration of various media in the campaign ◄◄ ◄◄ ◄◄ ◄◄◄◄ ◄◄

The findings indicate that both parties opted to use campaign strategies that sought to integrate various media: rallies, flyers, billboards, free air-time in the public media, interpersonal communication (door to door) and relations with journalists.

Frelimo used rallies as their strongest campaign strategy which, on the one hand, sought to associate the holding of events that caught people's attention and the concentration of a large public attendance in the same place, in order to garantee magnified images in the coverage of the media. For example, as observed in the rallies held at the headquarters of the Mucucune neighbourhood and 1º de Maio School, respectively on 14 and 15, there was a tendency to hold more shows during the campaign with few messages on the candidates' manifestos.

For its part, MDM presented a campaign mostly focused on interpersonal communication (door to door). As stated by the party's campaign coordinator, Feliciano Machava, interpersonal communication "is the most effective strategy, because it leads us directly into contact with the voters," avoiding rallies because "voters [at meetings] do not have the opportunity to interact

and discuss the candidate's governance programme (7). „

However, taking into account the time the candidate generally had to engage with the voters, the interpersonal contact was insufficient for the residents of Inhambane to question governance programs of any of the candidates.

That contact [interpersonal] was less than two minutes per household. On the other hand, the set-up of households in the outskirts of Inhambane discourages door to door contact. For example, in the neighborhood of Guíua and Siquiriva, were MDM opted for rallies it would not have been possible to reach ten households in a working day starting from 8am to 4pm, contrary to what its campaign coordinator said. The distance between two homesteads can be more than five kilometres.

Therefore, both political parties did not during the campaign processes properly address the issues listed in their manifestos as programmes of governance.

An analysis to the speeches of both candidates reveals that the manifestos stated one thing and

(7)The MDM member's statement could be questioned because the average time MDM's candidate spent with a voter was a minute and a half. We feel it was not enough to foster the discussion of the manifesto with each voter. Furthermore, CODD observer team noted that MDM's campaign was focused in one front; and hence we question the efficacy of the door to door

their contact with the voters touched on issues foreign to what was documented (in their manifestos). Fernando Nhaca generally spoke of "Inhambane for All", but never said what would be done to accomplish this. For his part, Benedito Guimino spoke on continuity and paving the dirt road which leads to Tofo beach.

The positioning of the two parties in terms of the key means used, may somewhat explain the level of success and the relationship created with journalists. If on the one hand, Frelimo party appeared a little more structured in the promotion, agenda-setting and communication with journalists, on the other hand, MDM seemed more secretive to journalists vis-à-vis their events.

It could be said that in many cases, journalist's stories on the candidates were mostly initiated by the former rather than by the political parties. Often for strategic reasons, political parties shared their agenda on the day of the event which rendered the media coverage difficult. This aspect was more noticeable with MDM which did not have a structure to promote events for routine media coverage.

Observation of visual media (T-shirts, flyers, billboards) showed that Frelimo's campaign had a stronger presence compared to MDM's. A count in two places, namely in the the semi-public transport bus station and the Giló market, showed that out of an average of four pamphlets or four political parties t-shirt wearing people, one or none were MDM's and three or all were Frelimo's. This exercise was undertaken four times, in separate occasions, in the last three days of the campaign, 13, 14 and 15 April.

In a general, both parties had a fair use of the free air-time provided by Radio Mozambique (RM) and Televisão de Moçambique (TVM). At RM, the candidates had a 10-minute slot, between 09am and 10am, and 7pm and 8pm, considered to be prime time. An alternate lineup order for viewing of candidates' information was set up. For its part, TVM offered 15 minutes per week to each party. The lineup order was established via a draw organized by the electoral bodies in the province.

MDM´s campaign director said that the use of TVM free airtime was not fair, having been given just given three minutes, whereas Frelimo was given 15 minutes. However, an analysis based on the items and broadcasting schedules indicates a possibility of lack of capacity to produce content by the two parties, since airing of TV spots was not continuous as there were not provided [to the station].

A clear definition of events, the holding of short rallies in several neighbourhoods and the concentration of small audiences to magnify the campaign's images was an aspect that characterized Frelimo's campaign, in a move to popularize the image of their candidate. For their part, MDM opted for a more minimalistic strategy consisting of a strong interaction with voters, trying to promote their candidate's electoral manifesto through conversation.

Another point that needs highlighting is related to the use of Internet and social networks. This was strongly used by MDM mainly to promote interaction and debate among the youth, a group considered as their potential voters(8) Although there are no studies on the use of internet in Inhambane, the reception of this tool of communication leaves a lot to be desired owing to problems of accessing the Internet which can be considered as precarious.

(8)*Interviews by our researchers, MDM Campaign Coordinator in Inhambane, Feliciano Machava confirmed that the youth were the main target of the party's candidate campaign.*

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Foto: Egídio Vaz

To analyse the question: what did the two candidates say to voters in the various mass media? To answer this question we can start from the assumption that it is not everytime that there is communication that we are dealing with an exchange of information, that is, it is not everytime that there is an exchange of messages that we have an exchange of information (Sousa, 2006: 24-26).

Political parties can exchange emotions, connect to the voters without necessarily providing content about their campaigns. This can happen in rallies where they sing and express their feelings, emotions about the candidate or party, withour the objective of informing but of persuading voters on the merits of a candidate.

This does mean to say that there is no exchange of information in music or humour used in several rallies. On the contrary, the intention is to distinguish the predominance in a given campaign of informative communication with messages that bear a load of useful information, as opposed to others merely of a persuasive nature, produced to spark emotion.

Knowing that in politics what counts is the vote, the ideal would be to have campaigns that seek to reconcile the two perspectives. This separation constitutes the presentation of two ideal types used to show the campaign strategies of candidates and the level of information conveyed so that voters would make

decisions in a conscious rather than an emotional manner.

In general, Frelimo developed a communication strategy with dual characteristics: that is, emotive/persuasive and informative. Using the slogan "Together for the development of Inhambane", Frelimo's candidate sought in his messages, especially those passed via the mass media and interpersonal communication (door to door), to convey information about the continuity of Frelimo's project.

On the other hand, spaces such as rallies were, in great occasions, used for emotional purposes. For example, the rally held on 14 February by Frelimo's candidate in the Mucucune neighbourhood lasted about 15 minutes, of which 10 minutes were used by the members of the caravan to have a meal, and five were reserved for the candidate's intervention. The intervention did not deliver any informative message; the candidate only introduced himself and his family, and ended with the following message in Guitonga: "I know what the people need. Within a month, I will be back to listen to your demands"! Further on, the campaign ended with "Viva Frelimo, Viva Guimino!"

One cannot say that the Frelimo's candidate main message is not informative since it expresses nothing in terms of justifying choices and what he intended accomplishing in the area of governance. It is a "basket of promises" without any informative content, especially

tailored for the moments of elation lived in the locale. These acts of emotive communication were common among Frelimo caravans. Women often got gifts like capulanas (loinscloths or cangas) and slippers.

Emotional communication was often used in a strategy developed by the party. There was a tendency to emphasize the image of the candidate, through his level of identification with the voters. As stated by the Frelimo's candidate campaign director, Benedito Nhassengo, one of the elements taken into account when choosing Frelimo's candidate was the need that he "has a strong rapport and identity with Inhambane city-dwellers."

Frelimo's strategy of personalising the campaign through the adjustment of the candidate's profile does not have an informative basis. That is, it is aimed more at appealing to people's emotions than the provision of information that will generate debate and act as basis for the choices of voters. Moreover, the negativisation of the opponent's campaign was a strategy used by Frelimo, mainly via the media.

For it's part, MDM developed a more thematic campaign, that is, informative and with less emotional resources. With the slogan "Inhambane for everyone", MDM opted for a speech of departure and change of the system of governance in Inhambane city.

"(....) Change. Inhambane has been in Frelimo's hands for over 37 years, but there hasn't been anything new. The whole structure in terms of infrastructure is colonial. Frelimo has never ruled. The roads are the same and poverty tends to increase every year. In the outskirts, people have neither drinking water nor power. MDM has come to say that with Fernando Nhaca that will not happen,
"Feliciano Machava, MDM Campaign Coordinator.

With a candidate with a very strong social profile(9), MDM opted for a thematic strategy and communication strategies that could generate debate on the ideas to change in Inhambane. MDM avoided, throughout the campaign, the use of rallies because they were not a suitable media of communication to achieve their goals, "We avoid rallies because this strategy does not lead voters to question our manifesto and ask question should they not understand a certain policy."
Although there were parades of caravans

through the city streets in times of emotional appeal, these spaces were never significant or central to the way the message was configured.
In a full-fledged people's democracy and for a less literate society where the debate of ideas in almost non-existent, the emotional appeal and massive spread of messages, exploiting the candidate's personal characteristics and the weaknesses of opponents can be seen as elements to consider in the design of electoral campaigns. It somewhat explains the results and all the happenings in the Inhambane electoral process.

But it should be emphasised that the role of election campaigns is relatively very small in deciding on who to vote compared to other determinants (Pereira, 2007; Lazarsfeld et al., 1968). According to Lazarsfeld et al., 1968, p. 124, the role of election campaigns and the communication processes associated with them, produce three types of possible effects: stimulation of the indifferent, strengthening the party bond and conversion of the undecided, since the major impact of electoral campaigns is on voters suscpetible to vote for the candidate supported by the party, strengthening and/or stimulating this prior disposition. According to the same author, only 8% of voters changed their initial positiong as a result of an electoral campaign; and for Pereira, op.cit, p.15, the rate stands at 9%. The two authors' figures coincide despite the time and space that separates them, thereby strengthening our conviction of the statement mentioned above(10).

However, these results do not mean that the authors concluded that election campaigns are useless. Their effect does not correspond to the initial expectations, since the role seems more to be of solidifying the cohesion of party sympathisers around their electoral proposals, rather than convincing voters belonging to other parties to change their position. This result seems to be associated with a phenomenon of voters' selective attention regarding the electoral campaign, reflected on the fact that those who had more interest in politics and had already defined their choice were also those who paid more attention to the campaign on radio and newspapers (Lazarsfeld et al., 1968, p. 124).

(9) Fernando Nhaca spent 36 months without neither a pay nor a job. Public opinion held a strong belief that he was a debtor without many references as a school teacher in relation to Frelimo's candidate.

Lazarsfeld's study was conducted and published in the USA in 1968, while Pereira's was conducted in Mozambique and published in 2007.

The voters and the level of information ◄◄◄ ◄◄ ◄◄ ◄◄◄◄◄ ◄◄ ◄◄ ◄◄

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Foto: Egídio Vaz

To assess the impact of the communication of political parties on citizens, the mission conducted ten open-ended interviews with 16 voters of different social strata and residents in several of Inhambane city's neighbourhoods.

Firstly, voters acknowledged that communication is important for the dissemination of the electoral process and of messages on the candidates. Two of the interviewees identified television as the most important medium because it also offers images that enable the citizen to get a better picture (of the process). However, Radio Mozambique was presented as having a key role in the electoral process communication, chiefly due to its accessibility and for broadcasting in local languages.

Face-to-face communication with entities linked to the electoral process is seen as having been much more useful and successful for the candidates rather than for the electoral bodies (e.g. STAE) in civic education. Information about the elections gets to voters more via the radio, television, social networks rather than through voter education agents.

The intermediation role of media (Radio and Television) stands out in many cases, especially for their capacity to broadcat information in a simple and accessible language for the uneducated. However, it is acknowledged that these media contributed little to foster a debate on "why people should vote".

Regardless of the media type used, voters have a strong knowledge of the candidates and a weak knowledge of the candidates' manifestos. Voters say that they know the candidates' manifestos but when invited to talk about the content of these manifestos they say very little about their contents.

Voting continues to be an act of little importance to the interviewees, partly justified by citizens disenchantment with politics. They justify their positions by stating that they no longer give importance to electoral processes due to the fact that politicians do little to deserve the respect of voters once in power. One of the interviewees says: "politicians are humble when it comes to asking for votes but when in power they become arrogant".

However, there is a certain recognition that there must be a change in the way politics are played out in Mozambique. Otherwise, by continuing in the manner in which the processes are conducted, the citizens will continue not enjoying their right and duty to choose their leaders.

The lessons that can be drawn from what has been described point to a near-absence of the necessary information so that citizens could participate in this electoral process in an informed manner. Owing to this fact, citizens voted by resorting to the cognitive bias and heuristic method thereby overcoming on the one hand the lack of information and on the other

hand the need for it.

Therefore the meaning of the vote in Inhambane was not a result of a set of information disseminated by the electoral administration bodies or thematic discussions during the election campaign or even by voter education because there were never enough. On the contrary, the meaning of the vote resulted more from the relationship of trust that voters established with the sources of heuristic reasoning. By not having information on the themes and electoral manifestos, voters believed that the position of a certain candidate was or was not favourable to their interests based on the trust in a mass media, in an organization, in an entity or in a personality or in a degree of credibility they afford them. That was the starting point for the heuristic reasoning. That is, in fact voters in Inhambane decided based on trust not based on information. The political competence that voters showed when voting did not result from the information they possessed but from their ability to vote in accordance with groups, people and institutions that are credible and reliable references for them.

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Foto: Egídio Vaz

The Inhambane by-elections allowed us to learn the following lessons:

The Voter Campaign

a) There is no evidence that shows that had the voter education campaign been effective the levels of abstention would not have been as alarming as they were. Our research and monitoring team followed-up Inhambane's by-election process from the voters roll update to the voting day and noticed that the voter education campaign almost did not exist. STAE's ineptitude in this context has been recurring, and as such it is urgent to improve the strategies for mass mobilisation campaigns for the elections.

b) In addition, CODD believes that STAE is not being able to take advantage of the many solutions offered by information and communications technologies. For example, a partnership with mobile operators in order to remind or encourage people to vote could help raise voters' interest in the elections. Although Internet penetration in Inhambane is low, combined with connectivity problems, the use of mobile phone is so intensive that one out of four citizens addressed by CODD's team had a mobile, suggesting the idea that had the electoral communication, precisely STAE's voter education campaign, exploited the platforms provided by this technology, the pobrabilities for a high rate of abstention would have been minimised.

c) CODD is in no way defending the position that the use of this media per se would solve this problem. CODD is only stating that a serious voter education campaign carried out in the days stipulated by the law, coupled with with creativity and other opportunities offered by ITCs would reduce the abstention rates. CODD's research team noted(11) that STAE undertook a voter education campaign in only two out of 15 days dedicated to voter education campaign.

Electoral law and (non)compliance with the law

d) CODD thinks that the electoral law should no longer be a political instrument, periodically manipulated by main actors of Mozambican politics.

e) Consequently, the electoral law should be stable to allow citizens to familiarise themselves with it. CODD noted a complete ignorance of the law from the intervention of the Police of the Republic of Mozambique, culminating, for example, in the detention of lawyer Custódio Duma and more than three dozens of people, including Frelimo and MDM members and supporters. The reasons for the mass detentions are closely related to the low knowledge of the electoral law by the main actors, including the guardians of law and order.

f) As such, CODD thinks that some of the detentions made by the police, some legal and others illegal, result from of weak knowledge of the electoral law by its main actors, namely the

(11) *There were cases where their intervention were arbitrary and in flagrant violation of the electoral as, for example, the argument that was used to detain lawyer Custódio Duma according to which, he committed an electoral violation by taking a picture of a school far from the polling station.*

Police of the Republic of Mozambique and political parties, including individual citizens. The fact that the electoral law is changed at each electoral event can contribute for many not to master it, starting from its poor advertising.

The election manifestos

g) CODD suggests that in municipal elections the submission of electoral manifestos to the National Election Commission be made binding, and as such one of the prerequisites for approval of an application to the office of Mayor of the City since it is assumed that the manifesto is the candidate's commitment presented to the voters. However, we noticed that Frelimo's candidate did not have an original manifesto as the party supporting his candidature adopted the manifesto presented by the deceased mayor under the argument that it was a proposal for continuity. For CODD, the electoral manifesto is of vital importance since it establishes a bond between the candidate and voters. CODD thinks that the point made by FRELIMO is wrong, when adopting the manifesto of the deceased mayor as that of Benedito Guimino since his tenure is for a year and some months and not the five years that were to be enjoyed by the previous mayor. In addition, the citizens of Inhambane voted on the candidate and not on FRELIMO party.

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List of Interviewed People ◀◀◀ ◀◀ ◀◀ ◀◀ ◀◀ ◀◀

Anselmo Zimone, TVM Delegate in Inhambane, interviewed on Apri 17th, 2012.

Bento Nhassengo, Director da Comunicação da Campanha do Candidato da FRELIMO, entrevistado no dia 16 de Abril de 2012. Communication Campaign Director for the FRELIMO candidate, interviewed on April 16th, 2012.

Bernardo Madjandje, Chief Editor at RM Delegation in Inhambane, interviewed on Abril 17th, 2012.

Feliciano Machava, MDM Campaign Coordenator, interviewed on the April 17th, 2012.

Júlio Rafael, STAE Director in Inhambane City, interviewed on April 17th, 2012.

Acácio Francisco Madeu, government employee living in Balane 1 neighborhood, interviewed on April 15th, 2012.

Carlinda Feliciano, maid, living in Nhampossa, interviewed on April 15th, 2012.

Castigo Matsinhe, government employee, living in Muelé neibourhood, interviewed on April 16th, 2012.

Eugénio Guirugo, living in mucucune neibourhood, interviewed on the April 14th, 2012.

Feliciano Uetela, teacher and living in liberdade 3 neibourhood, interviewed on April 15th.

Felismina Maculuve, servant and living in Muelé neibourhood, interviewed on April 15th.

Graça Isabel Muchanga, student, living in Chalambe neiubourhood, interviewed on April 15th.

Rita Manuel, government employee and living in Balane 1 neibourhood, interviewed on 15th April

Leonel Comé, air time sailor, living in Liberdade 1 neibourhood, interviewed on April 15th.

Nasmodine Muhamed, Mucucune neibourhoodn Secretary, interviewed on April 15th.

Nelo Hereculano, student, living in Liberdade neibourhood 1, interviewed on April 15th.

Paula Azaria Malendza, student, living in Muelé neibourhood, interviewed on April 15th.

Turália da Delfina Mondlane, student, living in chalambe neibourhood, interviewed on April 16th.